

### Jennett's Park CE Primary School

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RE: Whatsapp Group

Dear Parents and Carers,

We have been made aware of a WhatsApp group that has been created by an unknown source called "We are trying to make the biggest group ever so add anyone you know." or "500 people."

The group was originally created on 17/4/25. There is only one group admin with no name. It seems to picking up momentum and many children have recently been added. The group now has at least 300 members. It seems to include Y5's, Y6s, Y7s and Y8's from schools across Bracknell and the content includes some very inappropriate memes and images. We have spoken to all Y5's and Y6's today and thankfully a lot have already removed themselves from the group.

Please could we request that you also follow this up and speak to your child/ren about this and report to Whatsapp if your child is affected. Please do check their camera roll if it has an autosave feature for Whatsapp images.

Kind Regards,

David Page

Deputy Headteacher













### What Parents & Educators Need to Know about

# WHATSAPP

WHAT ARE THE RISKS? With more than two billion active users, WhatsApp is the world's most popular messaging service, Its end-to-end encryption only allows messages to be viewed by the sender and any recipients: not even WhatsApp itself can read them. The UK's Online Safey Bill proposes to end such encryption on private messaging, but for the time being, this controversial feature remains.



#### EVOLVING SCAMS

WhatsApp's popularity makes it a lucrative funding ground for scammers, Recent examples include posing as the target's child, requesting a money transfer because of a spurious entergency — plus a scam where froudsters trigger a verification message by attempting to log in to your account, then (pasing as WhatsApp) and or text to ast you to repeat the sade book to them, without hem goods book to them, without hem goods.

#### CONTACT FROM STRANGERS

To start a chat, someone only needs the mobile number of the Whotshap user they want to massings. Therefore, if a child has ever given their number out to service their number out to service them vis. Whotshap, if a close possible that the child might be added to a group chat or community (by one of their friends, for example) containing other people they don't know.

#### **FAKE NEWS**

WhotsApp's connectivity end sees of use allow news to be shared ropidly – whether it's true or not. To combot the spread of misinformation, messages ferwarded more than five times on the opp now dispid y a "Farwarded mony times" lobel and a double arrow icon. This makes users evens that the messages they we just received in the from on original... and might not be entirely factual, within.

# CHAT LOCK AND SECRET CODES

in 2023. Whits App Introduced a Seature that fets users keep their chats in a separate Socked chats Tolder, saved behind their phone's passions. Imperprint or size in. There is an additional teature — Secret Code — where users set a unique password for looked chats. Unforturantly, this revents the potential for young people to hide conversations and centent feet as user.

#### VIEW ONCE CONTENT

The obliffly to send images or messages that cononly be viewed once has led to some WhotsAppusers shoring inappropriate material or abusive texts, knowing that the recipient can't reopen them late to use as evidence of misconduct. People used to be able to screenshot this disappearing content - that a recently added whotsApp letture rove blacks this, citing protection of privacy.

#### **VISIBLE LOCATION**

WhotaApp's Use Location feature left uses them that current whereabouts, which can be helpful for blands meeting up or parents checking that their child is safe while out, for example However, organs in a user's contacts list or in a mutual group chat can whe track their location—patentially lotting strongers identify a child's home address or journeys that they make regularly.

# Advice for Parents & Educators

ONLINE

#### **EMPHASISE CAUTION**

Encourage children to treat unexpected messages with caution; get them to consider whether it sounds like constring to friend of refative would ready send them. More sure they know never to share personal details over Whotsage, and to be wory at clicking on any links in messages. Setting up two-step verification adds a further layer of protection to their Whotsapp account.

#### ADJUST THE SETTINGS

It's wise to change a chird's WhatsApp settings to specify which of their contacts can add them to group chats without feeding approval. You can give permission to My Contacts or My Contacts Except... Additionally, if a child needs to use like Location, emphasism that they should enable this function for only or long as they need.

#### **CHAT ABOUT PRIVACY**

Check in with the child about how they're using WhatsApp, making sure they know you only have their sofely of heart. If you upon a Locked Chats folder, you might want to tak about the sort of content they've stored in them, who they're taking in, and why they want to keep these chats headen. Also, if children send only

#### DISCUSS GROUP CHATS

Make children aware that there could be members of a group that they don't know well and that words can be mismisrproted, thousing them to leave a good impression, to avoid joining in it conversations turn towards buttying, and to respond to such situations in an appropriate way. Make sure they know that it is OK to leave a group shat if it makes then uncomprotable or for any regard. In fact,

#### THINK BEFORE SHARING

help children understand why it's important to stop and think before posting as forwarding comething on WhatsApp. It's easy—and od too common—for content that a user posts to be shared more widely, even publicly on social media. Encourage children to consider how an impulsive message or forwarding might demage their reputation or usest of find who sent something to them in conflictance.

#### Meet Our Expert

Dr Claire Sutherland is an online safety consultant, educator and researcher who has developed and implemented anti-butlying and cyber safety policies for schools. She has written various academic papers and carried out research for the Australian Government comparing internet.

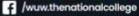


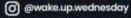
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